



Measuring Gauge

Like a lot of knitters, I'm not all that keen on knitting gauge swatches. But after a number of failed projects I was forced to take them seriously as the most important first step to any project that involves a new yarn, needle, or stitch pattern. Below are the steps that I've found most reliable for measuring gauge. You'll find a lot more valuable information in my Craftsy/Blueprint class titled Knit Like A Master (<https://annbuddknits.com/media-apps/knit-like-a-master/>).

To begin, knit a swatch that measures at least 6" (15 cm) square with the yarn, needles, and stitch pattern that you plan to use for your project. If using a stitch pattern, be sure to include at least two (2) pattern repeats both widthwise and lengthwise. Take the measurements as described below. Use my downloadable Gauge Swatch Worksheet to keep track of your numbers.

If you have too many stitches per inch (2.5 cm), start over with larger needles; if you have too few stitches per inch (2.5 cm), start over with smaller needles. Use the downloadable Gauge Swatch Worksheet to keep track of your measurements.

Measurement 1: Straight off the Needles

- Measure the number of stitches across 4" (10 cm), including partial stitches. Divide this number by 4 to get the number of stitches per inch (2.5 cm).
- Measure the number of rows along 4" (10 cm), including partial rows. Divide this number by 4 to get the number of rows per inch (2.5 cm).

Measurement 2: Washed, Blocked, and Relaxed

- Soak the swatch in lukewarm water with wool wash for at least 20 minutes.
- Squeeze out water, roll in a towel to blot out excess moisture, and place on a flat surface to dry, using blocking wires as necessary.
- When thoroughly dry, shake out swatch so that the stitches relax.
- Measure the stitch and row gauges again.
- If these gauges are different from Measurement 1, use these numbers when determining your gauge.

Measurement 3: After Hanging 24 Hours

If the yarn contains more than 25% of a "slippery" fiber (i.e., alpaca, silk, bamboo, etc.) and less than 75% wool, measure the "hang" gauge as described below.

- Hang the dry swatch on a hanger with binder clips.
- Attach two or three binder clips to the lower edge of the swatch to mimic the effects of gravity, and let hang for 24 hours.
- Measure the stitch and row gauges again.
- If these measurements are different from Measurement 2, use these numbers when determining your gauge.